requirement at the request centre.

(e) There is no such specific case where transfer has been made frequently within Jaipur & Bikaner Zone during last three years.

Floating of global sovereign bond for liquidating high cost debt

678. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to float global sovereign bonds in the international market to liquidate its high cost debt as reported in the Business Standard of 10th June, 2002, if so, the details thereof;

(b) the recommendations of the High Level Committee appointed to work-out the modalities of reducing its stock of costly external debt;

(c) the total amount of foreign loan Government owe; and

(d) what other measures are proposed to be taken to reduce the foreign loan debt?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE): (a) There is no such proposal to float global sovereign bonds in the International market to liquidate the high cost debt as reported in Business Standard of 10th June, 2002.

(b) The ad-hoc group on pre-payment of high cost external debt has recommended identification of high cost loans based on certain benchmarks/guidelines. Accordingly, the expensive external debt is being taken up for pre-payment.

(c) The external debt on Government account as March 31, 2002 was US$ 40.58 billion from multilateral/bilateral sources.

(d) The reduction in the external debt is envisaged primarily on the basis of retiring of expensive external debt being identified as per the recommendations of ad-hoc group as elaborated in para (b).

Selling off UTIs holdings in ITC Ltd.

679. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Unit Trust of India (UTI) has offloaded most of its Monthly Income Plan (MIP) portfolios in the market to a few large FIIs;

(b) If so, the details thereof;

(c) whether UTI has sought permission from Government to sell its holdings in ITC Ltd., to its foreign partner BAT in view of its current liquidity constraints; and

(d) if so, the details of the UTI stake in ITC Ltd. and what is Government's response to the UTI's suggestion to sell its holdings?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI GANGARAM GEETE): (a) and (b) Every maturing scheme is expected do dispose of the holdings in its portfolio in order to generate the amounts required to be paid to the investors in the scheme. Accordingly, the Monthly Income Plans (MIPs) dispose of, in the market, the securities in their portfolios. According to UTI, MIPs have not disposed of any securities directly to any FIIS.

(c) and (d) UTI has intimated that no permission has been sought by it from the Government to sell its holding any specific company or buyer. UTI holds 2,94,95,935 equity shares of ITC Ltd. as on 12th July, 2002.

Crack down on Urban Cooperative Banks in Tamil Nadu

680. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the RBI has cracked down two Urban Cooperative Banks in Tamil Nadu;

(b) if so, whether this is the first time RBI has cracked down on UCBs in Tamil Nadu;

(c) whether these banks are asked to register with RBI in order to bring them under Banking Regulation Act;

(d) if so, whether the action of the RBI follows the implementation of the recommendations by the High Power Committee set up under the chairmanship of Mr. K. Madhava Rao in 1999; and

(e) if so, to what extent the recommendations of the High Power